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# The Unicorn Newsletter Fall 2014

Stephanie Nunley

Cleveland State University, [s.nunley@csuohio.edu](mailto:s.nunley@csuohio.edu)

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A publication from the faculty and staff in the Department of English



Cleveland State University  
The Department of English

# The Unicorn

FALL 2014

## Letter from the Chair

By Dr. David Larson, Assoc. Professor Emeritus and Interim Chair



Welcome to the revived Unicorn.

When I arrived at Cleveland State in 1975, joining thirty-three other full time English Department faculty, the English Department's newsletter, The Unicorn,

was well known on campus. Begun in February, 1970 by Lou Milic, the new Chair of the Department, it was edited for more than twenty years by a series of dedicated faculty members. The Unicorn was one of the first (perhaps the very first) departmental newsletters at Cleveland State. Through it, the English Department informed the rest of the University of its students' and faculty's accomplishments, and it published articles and interviews on various matters of interest to students of literature and linguistics.

The original Unicorn inspired other Departments to start their own newsletters, thus helping CSU's departments keep in touch with each other. Some of these are still published. Unfortunately, The Unicorn itself gradually faded and finally vanished. As the

English Department's discretionary budget dwindled, and the numbers of its full time faculty shrank even as their service obligations increased, publication of the newsletter became too burdensome to maintain.

Thanks to the talents and work of Stephanie Nunley, the English Department's current secretary, The Unicorn, has been reborn. (Perhaps we should have renamed it The Phoenix, but we decided to stick with its traditional name.) The Department still does not have the budget for a print version, so our newsletter is being recreated as an electronic publication. Under Stephanie's skillful editing, the newsletter will appear approximately once a semester. It will share the activities and accomplishments of the Department's students and faculty with our current and former colleagues, with alumni, and with the Cleveland State community. If retired colleagues (faculty and staff) and former students let Stephanie know what they are doing, we will gladly share that information as well. Stephanie's email is: s.nunley@csuohio.edu. Please send her news about life after CSU. (Continued on p.4)

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## GREAT ADDITIONS



**Caryl Pagel**  
**Director of**  
**the Cleveland**  
**State**  
**University**  
**Poetry Center**

Caryl Pagel is the author of two full-length collections of poetry, *Twice Told* (H\_NG M\_N Books, 2014) and *Experiments I Should Like Tried At My Own Death* (Factory Hollow Press, 2012) as well as two chapbooks, *Mausoleum* (Winterredpress, 2013) and *Visions, Crisis Apparitions, and Other Exceptional Experiences* (Factory Hollow Press, 2008). Her poems and essays have appeared in *AGNI*, *Denver Quarterly*, *The Iowa Review*, *Jacket2*, *The Mississippi Review*, and *Thermos*, among other journals, and she is currently at work on a collection of essays. Caryl is the co-founder and editor of *Rescue Press*, a poetry editor at *jubilat*, and the new Director of the Cleveland State University Poetry Center.



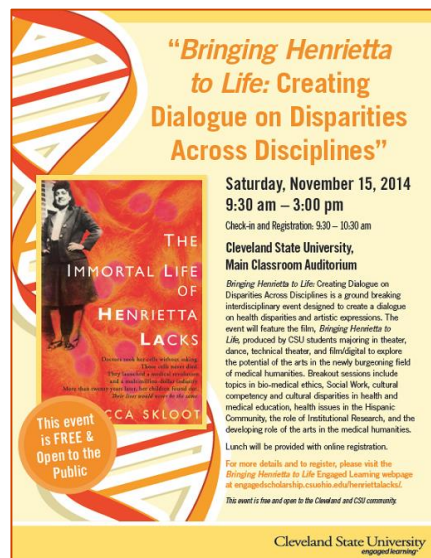
**Emilie Zickel**  
**College Lecturer**

Emilie Zickel has taught as a part-time instructor at CSU for 8 years and in 2012 was named one of the "50 most engaging instructors" by Cleveland

State University Students. She holds a B.A. in French from Miami University and an M.A. in English from Cleveland State University, where her studies focused on literature and curriculum design for writing courses. As a lecturer, Emilie is interested in exploring and implementing new methods of digital pedagogy and composition across her English courses. Beyond her academic pursuits, Emilie has participated in several community development programs, including City Year Cleveland, the Peace Corps, and the Cleveland Leadership Center's Cleveland Executive Fellowship. This spring, along with her fellow First Year Writing lecturers, Emilie will present the results of a Fall 2014 research study about students' use and perceptions of technology in First Year Writing courses at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC).

## Bringing Henrietta to Life: Creating Dialogue on Disparities across Disciplines

by Adrienne Gosselin, Assoc. Prof. & Chair of CLASS Dean's Diversity Council



The primary charge of the Deans Diversity Councils is to incorporate awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion across the university. Each Dean works with a council to create strategies and actions appropriate to the disciplines. One objective of the CLASS Dean's Diversity Council is to create curricular / co-curricular opportunities that contribute to research on the potential of the arts in the medical humanities and health education. Our second project was to produce *Bringing Henrietta to Life*, an interdisciplinary collaboration using music, dance, theatre and film, and then present the film in an academic venue that could engage dialogue on health disparities across disciplines, using the half-hour film as a means to focus and facilitate dialogue.

From the start, *Bringing Henrietta to Life* has been a lesson in creative problem solving. For me, the project documents the evolution of an idea, born and nurtured by faculty collaboration at every level. I begin with Holly Holsinger's statement on the [Henrietta webpage](#).

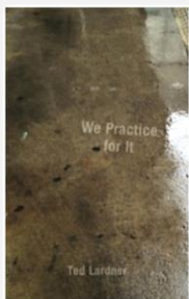
*In 2011, I was asked to create an event in connection with the Freshman Common reading selection, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. My impulse was to bring*

*Henrietta's story to life through different performance mediums, so that students might experience the different ways performance can communicate meaning and initiate conversation. I called on some of my colleagues to collaborate on the project. Lynn Deering, Director of the Dance Program, came on board to choreograph a piece inspired by the themes in the book and Adrienne Gosselin, an English professor, joined us in writing and directing a piece in reaction to the book. Lisa Bernd, a fellow theatre professor, joined us as dramaturg. I devised a theatre piece collaboratively with students, adapting sections of the book and weaving them together. That original project of all three, entitled *Bringing Henrietta to Life*, played to packed audiences of freshman in the fall 2011, and was revisited in an integrated piece for the Spring Dance Concert. The exploration and integration of the original work continued as we approached making a film with Evan Lieberman, a film professor in the School of Communication. Our vision has broadened and deepened and hopefully with the making of the film, Henrietta's story can impact a wider audience.*

As educators the faculty who collaborated on this project recognize *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* to be not only important, but also unique in its ability to introduce readers to such a broad range of topics in medical humanities. Once the film was complete, partnerships with the Dean's Diversity Councils for CLASS, Law, Nursing, and College of Sciences and Health Professions expanded the forum for venue and community outreach. The collaboration crossed four colleges and received an award from the Provost. A second conference in November co-sponsored by CLASS, Nursing, and College of Education and Health Sciences and included a greater focus on research and participation by NEOMED faculty.



## WINNER OF THE SUNKEN GARDEN POETRY PRIZE



Ted Lardner is the author of two previous chapbooks, *Tornado* (Wick Poetry Series, 2008) and *Passing by a Home Place* (Leaping Mountain Press, 1987). His chapbook *We Practiced for It* was chosen by poet and essayist Mark Doty as winner of the 2014 Sunken Garden Poetry Prize, sponsored by Hill-Stead Museum and Tupelo Press.



**TED LARDNER**  
READING FROM HIS CHAPBOOK "WE PRACTICED FOR IT" DURING A POETRY READING AT SUNKEN GARDEN POETRY FESTIVAL  
On July 23, 2014, at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, Connecticut

## (First-Year Writing continued)

Engaged Reader. Designed by the program and published by Van-Griner, the text is being used by all instructors in the program. The creation of this textbook has allowed the program to shape its content more deliberately and more meaningfully. Students in our courses will find that the reader provides multiple entry-points into a number of topics crucial to being engaged with CSU, Cleveland, and the world communities.

Award Winning Collaborations

CLASS Dean's Diversity Council lead by Adrienne Gosselin was awarded the **President's Award for Excellence in Diversity for 2013-2014** for the one day conference **Bringing Henrietta to Life** (article on page 3).



## We Practiced for It

by Ted Lardner, Professor and Poet

Tomorrow, the world ends.  
Today, I'm driving my son  
To Mayfield Middle School.  
At the stoplight, we picture  
Where the zombies will come  
"From China," he says.  
"An experiment went wrong."  
"Shipping containers. Washing up.  
Zombies, climbing out on the  
rocks."  
The light stays red.  
...Good friends lost/ along the way...  
Rockets falling in Gaza...  
I hate myself, I would never do that  
to you...  
The light changes.  
I miss most of what he says.

We swing left, toward school.  
The test in language arts this  
morning  
Is to write a story using Freytag's  
structure  
And paragraph indentation.  
We practice, making up two guys.  
(James and Paul.)  
They're going to break out of prison.  
(Why were they in? Moonshining.)  
(Why were they escaping? Paul  
wants to be home for Christmas.  
His old Maw will be too lonesome.

James knows Paul  
Will never make it on his own.)  
Think of the resolution, I say.  
Under new names, the part  
Where they live out their days, in West  
Virginia.  
We are almost there.  
The shooting last week in Connecticut  
—  
Do we need, I had wondered, to  
discuss it?  
The buses, sealed at their emergency  
exits  
With iridium reflective tape, float,  
rectangles  
Lumbering past in winter murk.  
I'd dreamed I'd caught an enormous  
fish.  
It took the whole dream, struggling it  
up the rocks.  
To free it to the water again.  
The whole time, someone waving  
goodbye.  
For sensory details, we thought  
Of the sounds of the prison.  
The guard's soft-soled shoes,  
Squeaking down the hall.  
Under our hands and knees,  
The grit of cold cement.  
We smelled the air outside.  
Damp earth in the cold night.

## (Letter from the Chair continued)

This new, electronic version of The Unicorn may be less ambitious in scope than its predecessor, but it will allow the English Department to spread the word of its current work to former faculty, staff, students, and the CSU community. Through email its recipients can in turn share their news with those of us who are still in the Department. Keeping in touch with each other, creating and maintaining a sense of community—I think those are worthy goals.

Again—welcome to the new incarnation of The Unicorn.

David Larson  
Interim Chair



## AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

John Brentar

This fall John Brentar became the first College Lecturer to be awarded the 2014 **CLASS Excellence in Teaching Award**. John joins the ranks of Rachel Carnell, Jeff Karem, Ted Lardner and Gregory Sadlek who have also achieved this award through service in English.

Rachel Carnell

In September Rachel Carnell became the first English Department member to be honored with the **Golden Apple Award by the Young Council of the CSU Alumni Association** in recognition of her exceptional contribution to the lives of CSU students.

Adam Sonstegard

This fall Adam Sonstegard was awarded one of 5 **Faculty Scholarship Initiative Awards from the University Research Council** for his study of graphic illustrations in the works of Charles Chesnutt.

Mike Geither

Creative Writer and Director of the NEOMFA program Michael Geither received the 2014 **Distinguished Faculty Award from Cleveland State University** and the **2014 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award in Playwriting**.



*Image by Dan Riordan, CSU*

Ted Lardner

This year Ted Lardner was awarded the 2014 **Shrunken Garden Poetry prize** for his work on his chapbook "We Practiced for



It". See excerpt on page 4.

Imad Rahman

Creative Writer and Associate Professor Imad Rahman won the 2014 **Individual Excellence Award from the Ohio Arts Council**.



*Image by Marvin Fong, The Plain Dealer*

## Tear It Off – Finding escape, excitement and possibility in your writing

by Michael Geither, Assoc. Prof and Director NEOMFA

Romance literature has been a revelation to me. To be clear: I've read a good number of novels in the past few years that I take from the shelves of the Lakewood Public Library simply because I see on their covers men and women embracing, couples in various states of undress, bare midriffs, cowboy hats, etc. How I got started in this habit is a mystery to me but, nevertheless, here I am under a spell.

Part of what's drawn me to these books is the eagerness of their authors to embrace the tropes of the genre. In what I read, there is no shortage of adults catching one another's gaze across a crowded room, of heavenly abs, of men or women washing cars in the hot sun. There are scorned lovers, sick lovers, surprise lovers, redemption lovers, revenge lovers, runaway lovers, reunited lovers, secret lovers, sudden lovers, royal lovers, scarred lovers, jilted lovers, disguised lovers, fling lovers, and, every now and then, lovers with amnesia. And there are no apologies. Ironically, there's a kind of pride a number of authors show by delving into something so innocent and arbitrary as character names. You may have a character named Brock who has ten brothers, none of whom have anything to do with the story, but who are all named anyway in a tour-de-force naming ritual – Dagan, Cyrenise, Alastor, Auburn, Hoyt, Cruz, Rogan, Saber, Treadwell, Cheg.

I find the freedom that many of these authors give themselves incredibly refreshing. Indeed, *Tear It Off* was written mostly because I wondered what taking this sort of permission in my own writing would lead to. Like a lot of folk literature, romance stories break many of the rules we associate with good writing and the principle of "Show me.

Don't tell me," is often the first casualty. Hearing the voices of instructors from my MFA years, I wouldn't ever feel comfortable writing that a character was evil. Instead, I'd create several brief impressions over a number of pages that *might* create the impression that a character had bad intentions and, of course, I'd have to give them some sort of paradox as well, maybe a reason to be dark or an affinity for puppies to balance things out. Romance literature has no such problem. If someone is evil in romance literature, you can almost always listen to them plot a murder in the first few pages.

I'd never describe this kind of writing as simply 'bad.' The prose may be wooden. The characters may be little more than blue jeans and a moustache but most of the stories being told are fulfilling some very basic needs. In the end, I hope my play is as uninhibited as the books I've been reading because I think I'm after some of the very same things – escape, excitement, possibility. *Tear It Off* premieres at Convergence Continuum in Tremont in August 2015, and I hope you can find a way to attend.

## NEOMFA- VISITING WRITERS SERIES

In 2014 has been responsible for bringing some of the most prolific creative writers to CSU's campus.

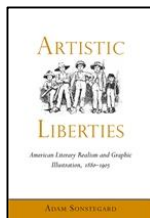


For more information about the Visiting Writers series contact  
Michael Geither, Director of NEOMFA at CSU

# Unicorns @ Work -Department Publications and engaging activities

## Dr. Adam Sonstegard-Taking Liberties

In 2014 Adam Sonstegard published his first book *Artistic Liberties: American Literary Realism and Graphic Illustration, 1880-1905*. In this text Sonstegard examines the key role that the appointed artists played in visually shaping narratives—among them Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Stephen Crane's *The Monster*, and Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*—as audiences tended to accept their illustrations as guidelines for understanding the texts. In viewing these works as originally published, received, and interpreted, Sonstegard offers a deeper knowledge not only of the works, but also of the realities surrounding publication during this formative period in American literature.



## Dr. Rachel Carnell- Secret Histories

In the last few years, Prof. Rachel Carnell has begun a new area of research, the political secret history. This controversial literary genre, offering gossip and scandal about public figures, was hugely popular with the reading public from the late seventeenth to the mid eighteenth century. Secret histories both shocked readers and rewrote familiar narratives of history. As Carnell demonstrates in her new research, the rhetorical and narratological techniques deployed by early modern secret historians greatly influenced the narratological structure of the emerging British novel. Last February, Prof. Carnell gave an invited talk on this topic at CWRU: "Slipping from Secret History to Novel."

She has also published two recent articles on secret history: "Reading Austen's *Lady Susan* as Tory Secret History," *Lumen*, 32 (2013), and "Eliza Haywood and the Narratological Tropes of Secret History," *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 14:4 (2014).

## Dr. Mary McDonald- Talk of the towns Conference Talk

"The Role of Tutorials in Remedial Students' Pass Rates in a Large, Urban Midwestern University." Eastern Central Writing Center Association. Oxford, OH. March 2014.

### Invited Participant

Virtual Writing Retreat Participant (15 people selected nationally to receive feedback on writing center research). *Writing Center Journal*, July 2014. Feedback: discuss student progress and convergence of resources along with the role of tutorials.

### Invited Panelist

"Contemplation in a World of Action: Thomas Merton in the 21st Century. Invited panelist

because of book on Merton Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP), Minneapolis, MN. April 10, 2015.

## ENG- GRADS: Students Unite

This Year also saw the establishment of the first student organization dedicated to English Graduate students. ENG-GRADS (English-Graduate Resource And Development Society) is an organization of graduate students in the English department committed to advancing student success in the English MA program and professional development within the field.

## 2014-15 Officers are:

**President:** Eileen Horansky, MA Lit.

**Vice President:** Michael Putnam, MFA

**Secretary /Historian:** Bill Burris, MA Lit

**Budget Officer:** Maria Alberto, MA Lit

**Advisor's Name:** Jane Dugan, English Department

## Dr. Jennifer Jeffers- Editing Beckett

Dr. Jeffers continues to serve as editor for Palgrave MacMillan's **New Interpretations of Beckett in the Twenty-First Century**. This series' goal is to stimulate new approaches and develop fresh perspectives on Beckett, his text, and his legacy. This will provide a forum for original and interdisciplinary interpretations concerning any aspect of Beckett's work or his influence upon subsequent writers, artists, and thinkers.



## D.E.S.S.E.R.T. – Better than Cake !

Dr. Julie Burrell, Assistant Professor of English, has created a new summer reading newsletter called Department of English Suggested Summer Engaged Reading Titles also known as

D.E.S.S.E.R.T. This reading newsletter is a compilation of recommended readings from members of the English Department at Cleveland State University. Look for the second edition of the reading series in May 2015.

# LevyFest 2014: Renegade Flowers

by Alex Nielsen, MA English Student, CSU

Events for **LevyFest 2014: Renegade Flowers**, a poetry festival and conference celebrating the life, work, and influence of Cleveland poet and activist d.a. levy (b. Darryl A. Levey, 1942, d. 1968), were held throughout the Cleveland area from October 24<sup>th</sup> through October 26<sup>th</sup>. An active founder of the Midwestern Mimeograph Revolution and perhaps most famously known for his arrest and trial in Cleveland in 1967 for distributing "obscene" poetry to minors, levy was also a small press operator responsible for the printing and distribution of hundreds of texts. levy is perhaps best known for his works *Cleveland Undercovers*, *Suburban Monastery Death Poem*, and *The North American Book of the Dead*. His work has inspired thousands of active poets and publishers worldwide.

In celebration of his contributions to Cleveland's small press heritage and reputation as a cultural center for poetry and publishing, LevyFest was co-hosted this year by Cleveland State University's English Department, the CSU Poetry Center, The Michael Schwartz Library, and community organizations including the Guide to Kulchur Cooperative Print Workshop in Gordon Square.

Events included a book launch for a LevyFest anthology (*Renegade Flowers*, eds. D.R. Wagner and John Dorsey, Hydeout Press), a publishers' mixer and reading at the Spotted Owl Tavern, community readings at The Literary Café and Lava Lounge, a memorial service at Edgewater Park, and a conference-style event series at the Schwartz Library including a keynote address by levy's friend, co-author, and roommate, Russell Salamon, a curated tour of CSU's levy print archives, a showing of the documentary film *if i scratch, if i write* (dir. Kon Petrochuk), and several panels and workshops. Panel presenters included English department professor Joshua Gage ("Mysticism in the Mimeograph Revolution"), Pace University's George Wallace ("Self-publishing and the radical impulse in American poetry"), and several members of the Cleveland poetry publishing community hosting roundtable discussions regarding topics such as publishing activist texts, public outreach, and educational programming in the arts.

# Department of English

Unicorn Newsletter

2121 Euclid Avenue, RT 1815  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Phone: 216.687.3951  
Email: [s.nunley@csuohio.edu](mailto:s.nunley@csuohio.edu)

[Addressee]

[Street Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]